

The Grapevine

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

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Palechek pushes perennials, zonal range

FARMINGTON HILLS — When it comes to perennials, Pam Palechek says she still hasn't met them all — despite nearly 20 years of designing and maintaining commercial and residential gardens and landscapes.

"And I have zone envy," the Farmington Hills resident admits with a laugh.

"I'm always trying to push the zone envelope. A landscape designer once asked me if I ever counted the different varieties of perennials in my yard — there are so many!"

The one-time art teacher who turned her hobby into a full-time career will discuss how to pack more flower power into your garden by "Doubling Up Perennials" at this month's meeting of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association.

"I'll tell you what you can plant to pair up and why, something I usually do in a three-hour class, so I have a lot of material. I don't want them to just copy it down, but to learn why different plants go together," Palechek said.

Her own half-acre suburban garden is a reflection of what she teaches, not limited by color, texture or variety.

"Right now when I look out there, I see Rodgersia — even when its not in bloom the leaves are so wonderful — and my Japanese waxbills are in bloom now and they're gorgeous. Everyone thinks just of the standard perennials in Michigan, the Goldstrums and Stella de Oros, but that's so ordinary when there's so much more."

That day she had spent with a client who wanted more than the rhododendrons and azaleas the former landscaper designer had provided.

"She asked me to tinker with the design because she loves perennials and has three garden rooms she wants to improve. I'm often called in after someone else has

been there because most designers are more interested in trees and shrubs. But perennials give a personal touch and make your garden keep changing with the seasons."

Palechek got involved with the Michigan School of Gardening founder Janet Macunovich after taking a class from her at Oakland Community College and going out on garden jaunts with her.

"When she discovered my teaching background she thought I could help write classes so I've been with her from the start, helping to develop the school" that today offers certificates in gardening fine arts and landscape and garden design.

Palechek teaches core classes for the school along with Vegetable Garden Pests, Landscape Design, Groundcovers, Gardens of Southern France, English Gardens, Bulbs, as well as Doubling Up Perennials.

Unhappy when her school district took her from a set classroom to Art in a Cart, she complained to her husband.

"He said 'why not turn your hobby into a career?' I was always a gardener. I had a master's degree in art education so I went back and took classes in horticulture."

She began her business by installing gardens during the summer months with her two nephews.

"I started with annuals, but when clients said they wanted something different, something that didn't cost so much, I moved to perennials and that's been my niche ever since."

The Advanced Master Gardener is developing a new class, "Japanese Gardens in America."

"Japanese gardens are an acquired taste, especially for me when I think the more flower power the better, and I've



October speaker Pam Palechek in her garden..

Next meeting

- 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 22, at Andersen Enrichment Center, Ezra Rust Drive
- 7 – 7:30 p.m. Meeting
- 7:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. Refreshments
- 8 p.m. – 9 p.m. speaker Pam Palechek, owner of "Petal Pushers" and senior instructor for the Michigan School of Gardening, discusses "Doubling Up Perennials"
- Be ready to order books

been to England three times and France twice, but working on this has really stretched my appreciation zone," Palechek said.

"At first I thought 'they're too green,' but now I think wouldn't that be interesting in the winter? It's something different, just like the French with all those pruned trees. Each type of garden has its up side."

She makes time for her own garden, despite her busy business and teaching schedule.

"(The garden is) established now, but there was a time when my husband was afraid to go to work, because he didn't know how much grass would be left when he came home."

Story by Darlene B. Damp, co-editor

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Minutes of the September 24 meeting

Judy Henning, president, called the September meeting to order at 7 p.m., Sept. 24 at the Anderson Enrichment Center.

Shirley McNier moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as published and Jan Meyer seconded the motion.

The treasurer's report was as follows:

Balance on hand	\$5,050.78
Deposits	11.00
Expenses	69.23
Balance on hand	\$4,992.55

As of Sept. 24 there are 163 paid members.

Judy was testing our new amplifier system. From initial appearances, it seems quite satisfactory.

The new by-laws were available for all to read. They will be voted upon at the Oct. 22 meeting.

We were reminded that volunteer hours

are due Sept. 30.

The Saginaw Valley Nurserymen Meeting will be held September 25 at Golden China Restaurant. We are permitted to send 15 members.

Program Director Gail Caird spoke of "Make a Difference Day" set for Oct. 23. There should be one or two MG's on site. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Gail.

Gail also spoke of a small but beautiful garden in Muskegon, which could possibly be part of a future group trip.

Joan Martin, a member and a nurse, reminded us to get our tetanus booster shots every 10 years.

Jan O'Dell spoke of the need for mentors for the 18 students in the current class.

Patty Decker announced that the Saginaw Children's Zoo clean up will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 11. This will be a "massive" clean up and there will be hot dogs for all. She has the sign-up sheet for anyone able to help.

Kathy Leach is in need of volunteers to solicit gifts for our Christmas Party set for Wednesday, Dec. 3.

Following refreshments, the group enjoyed Judy's delightful presentation on "Garden Ornaments and Whimsy."

Submitted by Ellie Robertson

Odds and ends

Nurserymen meet Sept. 25

Dr. Bert Cregg of Michigan State University discusses "Preparing for Winter" when the Saginaw Valley Association of Nurserymen meets Thursday, Sept. 25.

The membership meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. with cocktails, with a buffet dinner at 7 p.m. at Golden China restaurant, 2945 Bay Road. For reservations, call 249-8088.

Also scheduled is a session with Dr. Bridget Behe of MSU, who will cover "Connect with Your Customer and Make More Profit" on Tuesday, Oct. 14, at the Frankenmuth Bavarian Inn restaurant.

Cash bar is at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. and Behe's talk at 8 p.m.

The annual Christmas party is Friday, Dec. 5, and the Great Lakes Trade Show is in January.

Because of SVMGA membership in the association, 15 Master Gardeners may attend the meetings. Those wanting to attend must call Angela Irwin at 758-2500, ext. 224.

Help winterize roses

Help winterize rose beds at Anderson Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Drive at 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 22.

Roses will be mounded with compost and covered with leaves. Please bring a shovel and rake. Several wheelbarrows also are needed.

Sign-up at the October meeting or

contact Ben Pawlik at 793-4238 or email bennzita@aol.com.

Volunteers, plants needed

Volunteers and plants are still needed for the annual Make A Difference Day from 8:30 a.m. to noon Thursday, Oct. 23, in Saginaw.

Sponsored by Saginaw County's Promise and United Way, local high school students work with adult volunteers to spruce up yards of elderly area residents.

MG volunteers provide direction and instruction on planting, pruning and more – and do as much or as little physical labor as they desire.

Donations of shrubs, bulbs or hardy, tough perennials would be appreciated.

Contact Gail Caird at 793-1942 or sgecaird@hotmail.com for information, or plant drop off/pick up.

MSU offers EAB info page

EAST LANSING – Michigan State University's Diagnostic Services has an information-packed Web site on the Emerald Ash Borer.

The site, hrt.msu.edu/ash.alt/ can help you identify ash trees, the emerald ash borer, and possible infestations, while detailing how to submit samples and treatment options for homeowners, including exact diagrams of applying insecticides.

There is a printable fact sheet and a slide show.

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Letter from the President

With the unseasonably cold temperatures we have had, it seems like it is the first days of November, not October. The cold temperatures are a wake-up call for me to stop procrastinating and get my fall cleanup underway. We are off to New Hampshire for a family gathering so it will be a few more weeks before my cleanup starts.

I hope those of you who were at the September meeting enjoyed my presentation on "Garden Ornaments and Garden Whimsy." I enjoy giving this presentation and showing how we can have some fun in our gardens. Remember, our gardens are a way to express ourselves.

Pam Palechek from the Michigan School of Gardening will be speaking to us on "Doubling up Perennials." We will

learn how to combine perennials to cover seasonal dormancy and to fill in lulls in blooming periods.

We will be voting on our updated By-Laws at the October meeting. Jot down any question you have concerning the By-Laws and bring them to the meeting for discussion. There will be copies at the meeting if you did not get one.

Take care and enjoy the fall season,
Judy



Next board meeting:
Wednesday, Nov. 5

Newsletter deadline:
Monday, Nov. 3
Send submissions to
Beth Bedtelyon, Editor
daysendfarm@chartermi.net

To view the monthly newsletter on the Web site, please go to:
www.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw

To get to know each other, please wear your name tag at the monthly meetings.

Meet the Gardener.....Pat Washburn

Peaceful...and pretty as a park, her yard is, in Carman Park. You could say this Master Gardener was involved in the development of the move to suburban living in Saginaw.

Born and raised here, she married the son of one of our major land developers and still resides in the home she and husband, Cart (Carman Arthur) built together in 1967.

Pat Washburn rolled in her grandpa's wheat and played hide and seek in the cornfields as a child. She hoed a row of beans for a nickel and watched her grandmother kill chickens and make noodles for chicken noodle soup.

Her parents, though busy working in Ramond's Restaurant, one of the "first drive-in teen spots" in Saginaw, loved to garden. Pat worked summers at the drive-in but had no interest in gardening.

After graduating from Saginaw High School and MSU, she managed a home, two daughters, teaching, and studying for her master's degree at CMU.

Pat has gone from financial manager

at Michigan Works, a federal program with a budget of \$13 million, which encompasses seven centers in the Tri-County area. While working there, she has also obtained an additional master's degree in public admini-



Pat Washburn with granddaughter Zera

stration.

So...we are not surprised that she would want to master gardening as well!

While developing an interest in plants and flowers, Pat realized she wanted her garden as natural as possible without the use of pes-

ticides, "a confirmed believer against the use!" Even before she took the class, she was reading organic gardening magazines.

Since her involvement in the original group to organize our SVMGA, Pat has developed two programs that she currently enjoys teaching, not only to us, but to other community groups as well. These programs are: "M.G.'s Favorite Perennials" and "Taking the Mystery Out of Botanical Latin." In addition, she answers questions for the public in "Ask the Gardener" section of the Saginaw News.

Pat's advice.... We all need our "peaceful mental spot" where we can "get lost in what we are doing." She finds this spot in pottery making, whether it is in garden art (bird bath, bench, a water feature) or something practical like a bowl for the kitchen. We recently saw some of Pat's art in a class taught by Judy Henning.

Toward retirement, her major interest will be in pottery development but not to the point of production where she "has to do it."

She doesn't see traveling, not a tourist at heart, unless the area is warm and safe and she can live as a person in the environment for two to three months at a time. With one of her daughters living in California, that just might be arranged.

Story by Joan Martin

Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association mission statement

"Joining together as Master Gardeners, our mission is to promote our enthusiasm and knowledge of gardening by a wide variety of educational and volunteer activities in a spirit of fun and friendship."

Try this lawn care quiz and test your IPM knowledge

Robert D. Emmons developed this multiple-choice test to measure your knowledge of an integrated pest management program.

More odds and ends

Gardens ready for holidays

MIDLAND – Come lend a hand making holiday wreaths with Dow Gardens staff from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 19, to hang throughout the gardens during the upcoming Christmas Walk. Cost is annual admission.

Then Wednesday, Nov. 26, the traditional 13-foot poinsettia tree goes up in the Conservatory, with plants from its own greenhouses. The Conservatory is open every day except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Fee is annual admission.

Keep tetanus shots current

Any gardening injury that breaks the skin can leave you at risk for tetanus, a serious and sometimes fatal bacterial disease.

Almost one-third of reported tetanus cases come from gardening or farming injuries, medical experts say.

The tetanus booster shot is an effective means of prevention and should be given every 10 years.

Lockjaw, another name for tetanus, is a bacterial disease that affects the nervous system, producing convulsions severe enough to break bones.

The first signs of tetanus include headache and muscle spasms of the jaw. Tetanus is found in the soil and manure gardeners handle daily, and the smallest break in the skin is large enough to allow entrance of tetanus into the body.

Three out of 10 people diagnosed with tetanus will die from it.

The Saginaw County Department of Public Health offers tetanus boosters for \$20. Clinic hours at the main health department, 1600 N. Michigan, are from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Service is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Booster shots also are available at its satellite clinics. Call the desired clinic for its hours.

The questions come from his actual test of agriculture students at the State University of New York at Cobleskill.

- Lawn seed mixtures should be avoided if they contain the following species:
 - Kentucky bluegrass
 - Fine fescue
 - Perennial ryegrass
 - Annual ryegrass
- Turf grass that has the fewest pest problems is:
 - Kentucky bluegrass
 - Tall fescue
 - Perennial ryegrass
 - Fine fescue
- An endophyte is a fungus that:
 - causes serious disease
 - helps the roots of grass absorb nutrients and water
 - protects stems and leaves of some lawn grasses from insects
 - decomposes thatch
- Apply lime to a lawn when soil pH drops below:
 - 4.0
 - 5.0
 - 6.
 - 7.0
- Which of the following diseases is affected by lawn fertilization practices:
 - red thread
 - brown patch
 - dollar spot
 - leaf spot
 - all of the above
- Not more than ____ percent of top growth should be removed per mowing.
 - 20
 - 33
 - 50
 - 75
- Large populations of broad-leaved plantain, knotweed, prostrate spurge and goose grass are common where soil is:
 - compacted
 - b. droughty
 - sandy
- Soft, whitish, legless larvae found chewing on the base of stem or roots of grass are:
 - Japanese beetle grubs

- Aphids
 - Mole crickets
 - Billbug grubs
- How many sod webworms per square foot can cause significant injury to a lawn?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 5 or more
 - Hairy chinch bug problems are least likely on lawns that are:
 - Older and thatchy
 - Shaded
 - Composed of large populations of fine fescues
 - Dry
 - Which nematode species is used to control lawn insects:
 - Steinernema carpocapsae*
 - Bacillus popilliae*
 - Poa pratensis*
 - Bacillus thuringiensis*
 - The insecticide that would be least effective against white grubs is:
 - trichlorfon (Dylox, Proxol)
 - Chlorpyrifos (Dursban)
 - Bendiocarb (Turcam)
 - Imidacloprid (Merit)

The answers:

- D**, annual ryegrass
- B**, tall fescue
- C**, a fungus that lives inside the leaves and stems of grass
- C**, 6.0; liming materials move down through soil slowly and make not reach the root zone for several years.
- E**, all of the above.
- B**, 33 percent; more results in root loss
- A**, compacted, which can be reduced by core cultivation
- D**, Billbug grubs
- D**, 5 or more
- B**, shaded
- A**, *Steinernema carpocapsae*
- B**, Chlorpyrifos, sold as Durasban

From Horticulture magazine